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ABSTRACT

The two documents are collections of writings, tape transcriptions, and reflections of students at the Community Learning Center. It is the intention of the center students and staff to share these efforts and feelings with others interested in adult education. The entries range in length from four-line poems to one-page essays; the topics cover all aspects of the students' life: home, job, homeland, religion, school, and special events. Presentations by students in adult basic education and high school equivalency classes in "The Changing of the Times" are grouped under the categories: thoughts, the South, the North, and other countries. Presentations by English-as-a-second-language students in "Sometimes I Talk with Myself" are categorized as: reflections, firsts, and celebrations. (AG)

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The Changing of the Times

Part 1 of 4

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# THE CHANGING OF THE TIMES

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This collection of writings and reflections has been composed and compiled by the students of the Community Learning Center. This is the second edition of The Changing of the Times, the first edition was printed in the fall of 1972. The purpose of these offerings is to share our written efforts and feelings with others who are interested in Adult Education. The collection will have periodic supplements as we continue to share.

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THE CHANGING OF THE TIMES

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LOOKING OUT OF MY WINDOW

Sometimes at night, when the hours get near bedtime, as I get dressed for bed (not really wanting to go to bed, but my body feeling tired), I must lie down so that I can get some rest.

Sometimes, seeing my husband so restless, I wonder why he is so restless. He must have something on his mind, or his nerves are so bad that he cannot sleep. Sometimes I tell him that I'm not sleepy, but most of the time he wants me to lie down with him. It will make him feel better. And when I do lie down, as I lie in my bed, I begin to think about life itself and what is happening. And then I look out my window, look at the light and the sky and everything in it, saying what's up there? And then I think about death and life

Now to some people that may sound strange, but it is not strange because it is happening in this world today. I think about my sister and brothers, how God has blessed us so far. Maybe he is trying to tell us something.

What brought this thought to my mind was my brother. He told my sister-in-law that something told him not to take a trip, and he was trying to get his wife to take the bus. I think that maybe sometimes you get a warning. When my brothers go on trips, we worry until they get back home. But thank God, they make it

home safe.

You know, sometimes you can get pretty frightened, especially in the middle of the night, lying there when everyone is asleep, and you look out the window, wondering about your bills and everything else you can think of, the problems of the world and all the people around you. Some lady said that she believed the world was coming to an end because of all the people and things getting killed.

Azalene Dunn

Walking the streets
alone in the dead of the night
seems as if one is lost in a deserted ghost town
no noise
no people (no thing)
but the horrifying stillness of gigantic monsters asleep.

Arthur Lockmann

A LETTER TO MY SON

This is supposed to be a letter to my son when I learn he is a drug addict. Well, first I wouldn't write him a mere letter. I would go to him wherever he is at or whatever it costs.

Then I would say: A friend of ours told me you were using drugs so son, I am here to hear your story and help you any way I can. I know this will sound like a lecture to you, but believe me, I am only trying to find out what the problem is.

I was so sure after seeing many of your friends and my friends destroy their lives and families, that you wouldn't go near them. Some people have to learn things the hard way and have to experience them to really know them. While we sit here and talk it out quietly, maybe we can find out why you are dissatisfied with your life.

Son, is there something I am doing wrong? I felt I was a decent mother and I brought you up the best way I knew how. I was always there when you needed me. If I'm bugging you, please tell me now while we are laying out the cards. Is it a girl? Are you in love and don't understand it? Or are you afraid to love? I know you felt some of the pain I had when your father and I divorced. I also know you were aware of all the bitterness I had, but it doesn't work that way for everybody.

Just because we weren't happy, doesn't mean you won't be. If you are in love, love strong and feel good about it. Things will work out for themselves when two people are truly in love.

Your marks in school were always passable and you did a good job. If it is school or school work, maybe we can go to your dean or the school department and get this straight there. You will be out of school soon, and you will be able to get a good job with your diploma, so don't blow it for drugs.

These black revolution books you read, if they are getting you hung, forget it. All black people went through the same things that you are now, only things are better now. We are being recognized, we are being heard and we are being helped mo e than ever now. Don't take it all on your shoulders, you can't do it with a group of rioting junkies. There are black people all over that will help you understand all this black power, black power this and black power that, if that is what you want.

Being on drugs is like drinking from a bottle of poison. It will kill you in the end. Being high only puts things off for a while, but when you come down, they are still there, but they are worse now because you are a drug addict.

So, son stop running from whatever it is, and let's face it head on, with all the help you need.

Nellie Dedmon

## ADULTS

Adults
older, matured
work, provide, guard
protect the little ones
Adults

## FATHER

Father
bold, masculine
repairs, handy work, pays bills
handy to accompany mother
Father

Lynett Payne

THE SOUTH

THE PLACE WHERE I LIVED

I was born and raised in the South, in Atlanta, Georgia. The place where I lived was called Cabbage Town. There were no rich people living there, not many poor either. Some people owned their own house. I would say two families on Savannah Street owned their own house. Rent was high, $25 a month for a three room house. Rents have gone up since then, now you get the same house for $42.50 a month.

My daddy worked in the Mill. He made $60 a week. By the time they took out on him he brought home $48 and something. My daddy never missed any days while he worked in the Mill. He had to feed nine people and pay rent and buy clothes for us. People that had more than we did would give us hand-me-downs, if you know what I mean. When my daddy worked in the Mill, he would not get off for anything. They would not let you off, you had to work or you would be laid off for a week. I remember when my sister's baby died, they let my daddy off long enough to go the funeral. He could not go to the grave. After the funeral, he had to go back to work that day.

In 1952 we used oil lamps and a fireplace, and we cooked on a wood stove. We could not afford gas and light then. Me and my brother would play all day long, and when night came, we would sit under the street light and do our homework to take

to school the next day. Things got better in 1954. We got light and gas in our house. We thought we were rich, me and my brother would pull the string and the light would come on and off. If our neighbor's lights got turned off, Momma would run a drop chord through the window to let them have light until they could get the money up to pay the bill and have the lights turned back on.

At nighttime the women would get out on the street and sweep the streets, and we would burn the trash. The children would help by picking it up and putting it on the fire. Everybody would bring chairs out on the sidewalk and talk and sing up to 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning. The children would get tired and sleepy and would go to sleep on a blanket on the front porch. Everybody was one big happy family. If they got mad they would not stay mad long. Before the next day they would be laughing about what happened. If they needed something, they would send one of the children over to ask you. I don't care how mad they was, they would never refuse you, because they might need something the next day. It is still the same with people in Cabbage Town today. If you don't believe me, go down and see for yourself.

Carol Simpson

BABY BROWN

I grew up on the Brown Farm with my family. I didn't like Baby Brown's attitude toward blacks. When I was seventeen, he talked about kicking me because me and my brother were late for work. I told him that he didn't have any black children to kick. If he wanted anybody to kick, he better go home to kick his own children. Then he went and told my father that I was sassing him. My father told him, "You must have did something to him for him to react the way he did, because I taught him better than to sass grownups.

I left that same day. My brother asked me to go home to tell my mother about it. Instead, I went home and changed my clothes and then I slipped away. Baby Brown told my brother Solomon to fill his car full of gas and go bring me back home. Solomon came where I was staying with my uncle, and he told me that he came to get me. Then he asked me where the girls lived at. Then we got in his car and went riding. We burned out his gas.

When I left, Baby told me not to come back on his place. If he caught me on his farm, he would shoot me. When I left, I went back, my mother told me not to go by his house. She told me to take my father's breakfast to him. Then Frank came to the house and picked me up. He said he would take me to my father. Instead he took me by Baby's house. Then Baby asked me to marry Annie Mae. If I would marry her, he would buy me a house

full of furniture, and we could move down into Solomon's house. I told him that he must have thought that I was crazy. I didn't ever want to live on his farm anymore. He told me if he ever caught me on his place anymore, he would shoot me. But I went on his place many times after that.

Mack Mosley

## THE STORY OF BABY BROWN

He was a cheater and a beater. He was a hard man to work for. This man didn't care for anyone but himself. He liked to see Black people work hard and he always called us little niggers, I disliked him.

One day his two daughters Betty and Bernice and I were playing kick ball and I kicked it so hard it hit Betty in the stomach. She got mad at me and called me a little, black nigger. I told her I wouldn't play with her anymore because she called me that name and I didn't like it. Then one day two of my two other friends and I were going to beat her up, but her brother was outside with her. One day her mother was sick and my aunt had to work for them. She had to cook, clean, and wash and they paid her $4.00 for a whole week's work.

Juanita Mosley

WHAT IT WAS LIKE WHEN I WAS GROWING UP

First I would like to say there were seven of us children, two girls and five boys, and I must say my mother had her hands full. Like one time I'll never forget, my mother went to work and when she came back I had put two holes in my sister's ears. Boy, did we get a whipping. But it was fun coming up in the country.

Like in the winter you would go to school and come back home. When we got home from school my mother would have turnip greens, sweet potatoes, and fat back meat. Sometimes there would be just four of us, me, my sister and two brothers. After school we would have to get wood and sometimes we would go in the woods to get it. My brother would saw the wood up. Once I was holding the wood and the saw went into my finger. Sometimes it would get so dark outside. We would still be getting wood. And then we would have supper and after supper we would wash up and get ready for bed. My father would tell us old tales to scare us and we would be afraid to go to bed. When I got a little older I would stay overnight with my aunt. Sometimes I would babysit until my Mom found out that they were beating me. I was so small then I would hold the baby and I would put its head in my lap and the bottom on the floor. I love children. My mother would always say I would never have any. But I fooled her.

Oh, by the way I didn't tell you where I was born at. I was born at Garfield, GA. It's a little place in Emanuel County. That's about 70 miles from Savannah, GA. We were living on a farm. The Boss man was a mean and greedy man. He didn't want anyone to leave his place. I'll never forget when my mother and father

decided to move, rather when my mother decided to move. My father got so mad he went and got drunk. But let me tell you all this, we slipped away at night, we moved our clothes at night. The next day the Boss man found out that we had left that night, and he was so sure that we were coming back he slept in the house the next night. But we didn't go back until my mother go a lawyer and he wrote up some paper so that we could move our furniture. We went to Swainsboro, GA, and they gave my mother the court order so that we got our furniture. He was so hurt that one of his "family" moved. But let me tell you all this, we were the only family on the place that had a T.V. So when we were moving our furniture Baby Brown said that my mother owed him some money. and what he wanted was to do was to take the T.V. from us and give it to someone else. Mother told the police that she would give it to him and that would take care of the bill she owed him. She gave it to him.

We would have been there still but my brothers were all leaving, and they didn't want to leave,but they could not get along with the Boss man. He would come to my father's house and talk about my brothers. So one morning my brothers were working out in the field and Mr. Babe came out there and started picking at them. And one of them walked out of the field and kept going. He never lived there anymore and Baby Brown didn't like that. He said that my mother and father had some sassy children.

Azalene Dunn

# EVERYTHING BUT THE RIGHT THING

Fanny Carpet was our teacher. She was the fourth grade teacher and our class was in her room. She used to bring collard greens, cornbread, hamhocks, blackeyed peas and a big jar of buttermilk for lunch. She was a big woman; she was high yeller. She would give us some food to eat. She wasn't bad,but you better not do anything wrong. My friend Eula Mae, her mother would bake white biscuits, and she would bring them with peanut butter for lunch.

Professor Sullivan was the principal. He was a tall, baldheaded man with a big nose and a big mouth. He was a preacher. He'd whip you if you did the wrong thing. He always carried a stick with a wide, flat piece of leather on the end. When he whipped you it hurt bad. The first time he whipped me , I was eleven. John Parker called me Moody Jo, my knickname because I was wild. I told him not to call me that name because he had on his daddy's coat. Mr. Sullivan called me in his office, lay me across his desk and gave me that strap.

Wiggin and Paul used to bring big buckets of food for lunch: ham meat and rice and biscuits. They used to hide their lunches underneath the school house. One day my husband saw them put them there, and he ate them all up. Then he put dirt in the bucket,and Wiggin caught him. He dragged him out to the charcoal pile and beat him with charcoal.

## SATURDAY NIGHT

One Saturday night, Solomon and I and W.C. we went to Porter, Georgia to the movie. We saw a western. After we came home, me and W.C., we got our guns and started to play cowboys. My mother was working and she sent me and W.C. to the house to get water. Instead we got our toy guns. We decided we wanted to do something big which was holding up the bus. We saw the bus coming and we figured out how to stop it which was to lie down in the road. After the bus stopped, W.C. told the driver, "Get you hands up!" Then I told him, "If he knows what's good for him, he would do what the man told him!" Well, he put us on the bus and took us where our Mama was.

Mama told us she was tired and didn't feel like running, so she sent Sonny Boy to get six switches. She sat down and plaited them together. She put three into one, when she hit you one lick, she hit you three times. And all during the licking she was telling us how wrong we were. And we were telling her we were not going to do it anymore. That one whipping taught me wrong don't pay. Instead we still gave Mama a hard time. We would do things that we knew we would get a whipping for. We would go out into the mule barn and beat up on the mules and hogs.

Mack Mosley

## THE CHANGING OF THE TIMES

I would like to say, believe it or not, when we were going to school the teacher wouldn't let us talk too much about what was happening in the changing of the times. Like when the civil rights started real strong, they would be saying, don't be talking about this around so many people. But I could never understand why they didn't want us to talk about it. Until now they were really afraid of the white people.

I remember our bus driver, once they burned a cross in front of his house and he had to leave town because he was helping the civil rights organization.

Azalene Dunn

THE NORTH

## LIVING IN A PROJECT

Homes are numbered
from One to One hundred
In door number one
there's the smell of pine-sol
In door number two
there's garbage from wall to wall.

In door number one
the people are trying
In door number two
they may as well be dying.

Nellie Dedmon

## THE CHANGE OF TIMES

I was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts. I was raised here, also. I lived in Washington Elms for eight years. I am of a family of six, four brothers and two sisters.

I went to the Roberts School. I was graduated from there in June, 1972. After I got out of there I entered Cambridge High and Latin School in September 1972. I am taking a business course. In CHLS, you communicate with a lot of people, it seems like one household. There isn't any racial problem there.

I was raised with Blacks and Whites. At that time there was no racial problem. But nowadays, the blacks see you with a white person, you are called an Aunt Jane or etc. If you help a white person, you are called a slave by a black person, but seeing the blacks don't care because they are making their money from the white man. A couple of years back the blacks didn't have nothing against the whites. Seeing this world is changing, and everything is going backwards.

All people have to start realizing that races, nationality, and religion doesn't have anything to do with physical problems. No matter where you go there is always a whiteman going to be there. So, WE THE PEOPLE have just got to get ourselves together. That't why BLACKS don't have nothing, because they are always talking about the whiteman, this, etc, but he isn't worried he got what he wants.

I remember when I was about nine years old this white girl

called me a nigger and I almost hurt her because of that stuff.

Blacks are getting sick and tired of being walked on, and called NIGGERS.

But sometimes you can get along with the whites better than your own.

Francine Green

## ON BEING BLACK

Why do black people have to go through hell all their lives? They did not create themselves black. Why do stupid people act as if they are not human?

* * * * *

Blacks may never get ahead in this world because to most people they should stay poor and out of jobs. They can always steal and live like pigs and go to prison. How many people care a damn what happens to them?

* * * * *

I am black and love it. If I was white I would love it also. You have to stay as you are. You can't change yourself or let ignorant people put you down.

Yola Powell

MY LIFE'S TRUE STORY

First of all I was born in New York city. I lived there until I was one year old. After that we moved to Puerto Rico for a year, then we moved back to New York. We lived on Manhattan for four years. After that we moved again to Brooklyn where I lived until I was ten years old. The colored people didn't like my family because we were the only Puerto Rican family on the block. There I used to have a fight every day after school, my mother got sick of it so she moved to the Bronx. There I lived until I was seventeen years old. It was fun there, I had lots of friends and I never liked school either. So when we moved to Cambridge, I quit school. I don't like Cambridge because I don't find nothing to do here, and I wish that I was back in the Bronx, with my old friends.

Julio Cruz

## WHY I FEEL DEPRESSED

The cost of living has been going up every week. I don't enjoy shopping any more, everything is so high. It makes it so hard to plan your meals. I do hope that food would come down. My husband had a job for thirty-one years and got laid off and has been working part-time on odd jobs. It has been very hard on him after working so long on one job, and we have lost all our health insurance. I feel like I lost everything. I don't know what is happening to this country. I hope and pray things will change soon for the best for everyone. I think everyone is feeling it in some way.

**********

When I was a little girl, I lived in the city of Boston. My father was a fruit peddler. We were seven in a family, four girls and one boy. My mother did have five girls, but one died at two years old. We lived in a small apartment on the third floor. Four girls slept in one bedroom. I had a hard time in school. I was sick for a long time. At sixteen, I stopped going to school. I have been having a hard time since.

MY LIFE

I was born on April 20,1947. I was the second child to be born, my brother was born three years before me. I had what I would call a very normal and happy ch ldhood. My parents were not rich but they made sure that my brother and I had every thing that we needed. You might even say they spoiled us. It didn't affect my brother to much, but I was a bit of a brat. I have gotten every thing I have ever wanted since as far back as I can remember.

I was born and raised in Cambridge. I have always wanted to be one of two things. A beautician or a nurse. I have worked in a hospital since I was 12 years old. I went to hairdressing school, but that didn't turn out to be such a good idea. I should have gone to nursing school a long time ago, but I have been a fool and quit high school. I got married when I was sixteen so I never went back to school. I had my son a year later so I was kept pretty busy. Just when my son was old enough to go to school I had my daughter, and that was the end of school for me.

Now my daughter is of age to go to school, and I can get down to work and study to get my diploma so that I can go to nursing school.

Charlotte Ramage

# TEACHER

There are good teachers and there are bad teachers. I had a very bad experience with my fifth grade teacher.

I was a very good pupil until I got to the fifth grade. I don't understand why I could not get very good marks or listen too well but I could not. In the first four grades, I was an excellent pupil; then when this teacher started to pick on me, for no apparent reason, I became a very bad pupil. I was transferred to a different school after the year was over and thank God, I could pick up where I had left off.

This experience really had an impact on my whole life because I was kept back that year. When I wanted to finish high school I had to quit because I reached sixteen in my ninth year. I think if I had finished my tenth year when I was sixteen, I would have gone on.

Mary Vauda

## OLICK

Olick is like a big black bug
but never like a mean old bug
and she's like a person, cause I always get a hug.

Abby Elliott

## CIRCUS

Circus
amusing, funny
running, clowning, acting
Time can be amused
Circus

written together by
Josephine Davis, Lynett
Payne, Terry Young

OTHER COUNTRIES

## WHAT LIFE WAS WHEN I WAS AT SCHOOL

My few years in school were a waste of time and unhappy days, though I enjoyed being there. I loved meeting other kids at school and playing with everyone I met. I remember my father very much when he used to tell me how education was important in life. He used to promise me that if I finished my secondary schooling he would save every single penny just to send me to the United S ates to further my education. Being educated in Africa was something, though people with degrees never had so much fun like we used to think. Nowadays I feel it was worth everyone's while going to school.

I started school very late, when I was eight years old, and it was a law no African started school earlier than that. I can remember only kids who had their parents as teachers, or if your father had a Headmaster as a friend. I wanted so much to go to school early, before I was eight years old. One day I would.

When I started school I was very excited but after a few days I was punished for a mistake which the teacher whipped me for. The mistake was in arithmetic. The whipping caused my legs to swell. My parents were angry and upset over this and transferred me to another school. That's when I started hating teachers, especially the ones I had, they were cruel to people. I never liked being punished at all especially for a silly mistake, and I always thought teachers should be helpful and try to be kind if they were not.

They didn't care if you left and yet you wanted to learn but couldn't stand them. You can't complain about a teacher for mistreating you, if you do you are sucked from school. The system they used to use made kids run away from school, but I couldn't run, my parents were so strict. I had no choice, only stay and look at the teacher I hated without listening what he or she was saying. All my primary school results were quite good. I was always 4,5, or 6th in class.

I think my beginning spoiled all my interest in education. Also things became so bad when I started my secondary school. I was put in a class of white kids who didn't like being with a black in a class. Nobody talked to me. Even the teacher wasn't of much help, like my father had mentioned before. He started to regret sending me to a fee paying school, he sent me to that school because he was impressed with the results which the students achieved. It was worse for me for English as a second language. When my father died I just thought I could stop school and help my mother, and I did. That was the end of school for me. I was very miserable for a few months.

Now here I am; I want to learn very much if I can. I am sure I will try for my teachers are just great and I wish we had teachers like you at my old school.

Gertrude Mwenechanya

## FATHER'S DAY IN GERMANY

Father's day is always on the third thursday in May. It is like a Sunday, nobody works and women have to stay home. All the fathers go together. They have a wagon they decorate with green branches and flowers and anything they can find. They put two or three beer barrels on the wagon and they put horses in front of it. They put some snacks on the wagon like bratwurst or knackwurst or fresh rolls. They ride off then into the blue sky. They have no particular place to go.

Usually somebody has a guitar and an accordian with him, and they play and sing the whole day, drinking and eating. They usually stop in an open field or near the forest and make a fire out of the wood they pick up. (They do not set the forest on fire.) They grill their sausages on a stick over the open fire and then they eat it. It usually tastes very, very good. Sometimes when they run out of beer, they pick some up in a guest house. They usually stay out all day and come home happy and drunk at the end of the day and fall into bed.

Rosemarie Tijux

# MY LIFE AS A CHILD IN THE WEST INDIES

I was the sixth child for my parents. We liked each other, but sometimes we would have our differences. We would start to play and everything would be all right.

Our school was very far from home so we would have to walk or take the bus.

Our country was poor but our father would try to take care of us. Then after a while my father took sick so I had to stop school and learn to sew. After he died everything started to go down hill for my mother, so I had to take a job. I was very young so I did not get too far with my schooling and my sewing which I did not like in the first place. It was my mother's wish that I learn to sew.

I continued to work for myself, sometimes help my mother and take care of my sister's daughter which I love very much. I did love my home and did not want to leave it but was forced to after I got laid off. For a long time life started to get hard. I noticed that my sister was looking about leaving home so I started looking about leaving myself. At first I did not think I would make it, but I kept trying until finally I made it to the States where I can help myself and my family which is still in Jamaica.

May Fairclough

THOUGHTS

## MAN

Man
weak, strong
feeling, being, nothing
man is thoughtful
Man.

Arthur Lockmann

Sometimes I feel that my life has no meaning. I get up in the morning, get dressed, and go to work. And when I get done, I go back home. Sometimes when I get home, Carla will meet me at the door. She would say, "Hi, Mom." With Carla sometimes that is not enough for me. One of these days I would like to be by myself.

Don't misunderstand. I love Bill, I love Carla, but I feel lonely at times.

There must be something that I can get interested in, so that my life can be more meaningful. Could it be that I am searching for something no man can give me?

Azalene Dunn

Yesterday afternoon I bought a newspaper and went to the Boston Common to relax after work and read about the Watergate case. There was much activity on the Common. The Hari Krisnas were singing and dancing, people were playing with their dogs, some were feeding squirrels and the pigeons. There were fellows showing some young boys Karate and told them they should practice it with sticks and knives. After they got through, one of the fellas came over and said to me that they were wrong to tell those boys to train with sticks and knives, for they would only get arrested if they became acquainted with weapons. I agreed and told him he would make a nice model for young boys and invited him to the church to which I belong. I never read about the Watergate case, but it was worth it.

Tweed
(Ed Green)

# EQUALITY FOR ALL

It's quite apparent that people are getting fed up with this country and this ridiculous system. Take, for instance, the Women's Liberation Movement. Women for years have been restricted to their homes as house wives in a role which no one made up but the husbands. Society refuses to accept the fact that a new generation is coming upon the scene. Women believe and feel that they are equal. "We can do anything that men can do. We want equality!" Do you blame them? As far as I'm concerned, there should be no form, shape, or fashion of sex discrimination.

Michael Duke

CHILDREN

I think it's wonderful to have children in a home. I was without for eleven years and I didn't enjoy it. I used to take my nephews over my house weekends to sleep because I enjoyed children so much. Now I have adopted two of my own and I am very happy. My husband also feels like I do about the children. It makes you feel not selfish when you have to worry about someone else. At times I don't know the best way out on different things, what to do, and that is why I like to read about them. I want to do the best I can.

Theresa Vauda

## A NURSING HOME

I was talking to my oldest daughter Susie about the old people. If I was able enough to build a nursing home, I would take them in and my daughter and I would care for them. We would feed the ones that were not able to feed themselves, and we would keep them clean and treat them well. For the ones that were not able to pay a big price, I would cut the price for them. People have worked all their lives and then they spend it all at one time. It's not right,

I think old people need love and more care. Now they are not treated good. The nurses and aides yell at them and they take hours to come when the old people call them. They tie them into their chairs.

My grandmother is seventy, I wouldn't let my grandmother go to a nursing home if I could help it. I would quit work first and take care of her.

Juanita Mosley

## WISHES

I wish I could be more like myself.

I wish that some day people in general would stop robbing, stealing and killing. Then we all would be able to walk as we like and have no fear.

I wish that one day I would be able to take a trip to the European countries.

I wish that very soon president Nixon would give back to Massachusetts funds for summer jobs and programs.

I wish that one day we would not have to wear any boots or winter coats.

Amelia Payne

I wish I could learn better.
I wish I had learned when I was young, it seems so hard now.
I wish the president would cut the prices of food.
I wish I could lose weight.
I wish I had a better job.
I wish I had more Joy.

Juanita Mosley

## WISHES

I wish that the world could be peaceful.

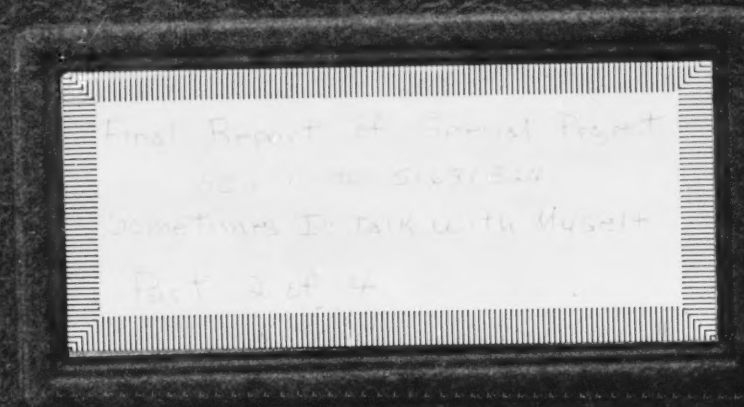
I wish that there would be no more sorrow.

I wish that it would be a bright tomorrow.

I wish all tomorrows would be happiness and peace.

I wish that all of the people, white and black and the whole wide world could be together. I wish that there would be no more hate.

Azalene Dunn



# SOMETIMES I TALK WITH MYSELF

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This collection of writings and tape transcriptions is the work of English-as-a-Second Language students at the Community Learning Center. The purpose of these offerings is to share experiences and feelings with those interested in adult English-as-a-Second Language. The collection will have periodic supplements as we continue to share.

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SOMETIMES I TALK WITH MYSELF

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Sometimes I talk with myself

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REFLECTIONS

# SOMETIMES I TALK WITH MYSELF

The first day of school we went together to a bookstore in Harvard Square. We bought some books, French books, on the first day. I think it was Monday. I got a ticket on my car.

I feel now that my English isn't very good, but I feel it's better. My tutor, she's a nice girl. She goes with me to the O.I.C. to find out about jobs. We also went to the aquarium.

I want to speak English all the time, but I don't speak it all the time. It's not good for me. I finish school right now and I will go to my sister's. We talk French or Creole, you know, and I go to work after that at night.

I don't have anyone to talk to. Sometimes my Supervisor goes to visit my job. Sometimes he talks to me, sometimes not. He just passes by and looks. Sometimes I talk with myself and I listen to the radio. It's not good for me. I don't speak.

Maybe I changed shifts to work in the morning. It would be good for me because on the day shift there are many people working together and we could talk. It would be very good.

Max Sautier

# LOSING A BABY

It is really a big problem when a mother carries a baby for nine months inside her and then loses him after one month. It was like a bad dream for me when my best girlfriend lost her baby son.

My friend lived next door to me. I was 16 and I was in high school when she had her baby. One Sunday morning, I was baby-sitting for her. The baby got a bad cough. My mother and I discussed giving him a kind of tea that we use for colds.

In the afternoon his grandmother came to babysit. I had to go to a party. I left him. When I came back I found him very bad. In the middle of the night, his mother, my girlfriend, had to send him to the hospital. Soon after he arrived there, the doctor put him on oxygen. He died at 3 A.M.

I didn't know that he had died. The worst thing was that I went to school and when I came back I found the whole house cleared of furniture. In Haiti we do that when someone dies.

I didn't have time to ask anyone anything; I fainted and fell on the floor. When I came to myself again, I was in my bed.

Marie-France Gérard

# MY FRIEND MIRIAM

My friend is named Miriam. She is a very nice person. She goes to the University. She is in the third year of Economics. She is a very poor girl. Her mother works too hard. She has two sisters and three brothers. When I was in my country, I made clothes for her and her sisters. When I was eight years old, we lived on the same street. We went to the same school and she is like my sister. I love her very much.

She has so many problems at the University. She sent me a letter and she is very angry because of strikes. She can't study anymore. She can't get a job because she doesn't know how to type or anything. She could work in a store but it's no good for her. Maybe for me, because I didn't finish my high school. I want to finish my high school. I feel sorry for her.

Julia Ballestas

# MAKING MONEY

It seems to me that priests make a lot of money. I don't know how. They collect money from everybody--for life and death.

If somebody dies, you go to the priest to say a prayer; he gets money. Everywhere he gets money. It's a business, let's face it. He has to make a living. If you don't give money, he might take the Communion bread out of your mouth!

In the old country, in the old days, they said: "Make me a priest and let me go to the forest. I will make a living. No matter where I am, I'll make money--good money!"

Bessie and James Skentzos

# A JUDGE IN HAITI

I finished my school when I was nineteen years old. After two years, I was appointed a court clerk. After two more years, I was appointed assistant judge. After four more years, I was appointed Judge. I was suspended three years after this, because of politics. After two more years, I was reappointed. I stayed a Judge for ten years. After Duvalier's death, I was absolutely thrown out. I came here six months later. My family stays in Haiti. I want them to come here.

Jacques Préval

## DIALOGUES

A What are you going to do this afternoon?

B I'm going to go shopping. Do you want to come with me?

A Yes. I would like to buy some Christmas presents for my family and friends. What time are you going?

B I'm going to go at 4 o'clock. What kind of presents are you going to buy?

A I'm going to buy a car, a big house for my mother, and for my sister, a beautiful doll.

B I think that you must be loaded with money to buy a car, a big house for your mother and a doll for your sister as Christmas presents!

---

A Do you like Cambridge?

B Most of the time I like it. Sometimes I don't. I get bored with being in one place. How long have you lived here?

A I've lived here for 2 long years. What do you think about the snow?

B I think it's very nice and so romantic! What cities have you visited that you really liked?

A I really liked San Francisco and Denver. San Francisco has a lot of rain, but no snow. Denver has a lot of snow. You would like it, because you think snow is "very nice and so romantic!" ...Sometimes I just think it is cold and wet!

---

A How tall are you?

B I am 5'10". Were you glad to come to school?

A Yes, I was glad to come to school because I want to learn English. What do you think about the weather?

B I think the weather is beautiful so far. Are you feeling better?

A Yes. I always feel good when the sun shines and the weather is warm.

A Do you like to watch hockey?

B Yes, I do. Do you have many friends here?

A Yes. I have too many friends. What do you think about?

B I think about teaching and eating and sleeping and reading and dancing and.... What makes you happy?

A Learning English. How do you feel about honey doughnuts?

B I love them, but I can't eat them because I am a diabetic.

---

A Are you happy to see me back in school?

B Yes. It's been a long time. Were you sick or were you on a vacation?

A I was sick--my back. I took my vacation in September. Do you like school?

B Yes, I like this school. I think we are nice people. I would like to invite you all to my house for dinner. Will you come?

A Of course!!! I think you are a very good cook!

# CHRISTMAS WITHOUT JOSEPH

I like Connecticut. It's beautiful. Connecticut is not like Boston. It's like Portugal. The restaurants, the houses, and the hotels are beautiful.

I liked the stores in Connecticut, but I did not like the movies I saw there. The ladies wore no dresses, no shirts, no bras, nothing. Nothing! It's no good.

Connecticut is beautiful at Christmas. The stores have lights, and balloons and Christmas trees. Maybe I'll be in Connecticut this Christmas, because my friends live there. Hermando and his family live there, too. He's my cousin's boyfriend.

My boyfriend is in Portugal. I love him and he loves me. His name is Joseph Bairos Moura. He's my cousin. His mother is my father's sister.

In January, Joseph will go for military service. I don't know--to Africa, I think. Three months in the Azores, then I don't know. They put some boys in the Azores, some boys in Portugal, some boys in Africa. There's not too much fighting in the Azores and Portugal. But in Africa--Mozambique--it's no good for the boys.

Maria Rego

# THE BIRD CAGE

One family had a bird. That bird was in a cage. There were a little boy and a little girl in the family. The children liked the bird and always put food aside for him at meals.

Every time the mother went out somewhere she told the children: "Never open the door of the cage." One time the mother went out and the children wanted to touch the bird. One opened the door and put his hand inside the cage to take the bird out. The bird flew out of the cage, but he could not fly out of the house. The children were lucky, because the doors and windows of the house were all closed.

When the mother came back she asked: "Where is my bird?" Nobody answered. When she said: "Who opened the door of the cage?", the children said: "Oh, Ma, Ma, we don't know." Ma said: "Ah HA!" They said: "We don't know!"

Now Ma took something--it was a stick. "If you don't tell me who opened the cage door, I will beat you with the stick!" I think it was the little girl who said: "No, Ma, don't beat me! I will show you where the bird is."

Her mother said: "Show me." The little girl showed her where the bird was. After that, her mother said: "Don't open the door of the house. We will wait for my husband to come home."

When the husband came home, they caught the bird and put him back in his cage.

Now the mother didn't beat the children with the stick. She said: "I always tell you not to open that cage door. You are supposed to understand that if you open the door, the bird will fly away. That is not too terrible. But if there were something inside the cage that could kill you, I would find you dead when I came home. That's right. I'm your mother. When I tell you something, you are supposed to believe it."

This is only one lesson. There are many, many lessons like this for children.

Francis Aubry

FIRSTS

## WHEN I CAME TO THE UNITED STATES

I came in an airplane. I came to work. When I got to the airport, I called my cousin and he took me to the apartment. When I came I had never seen the snow before. It was January. I thought the snow was beautiful. The first day I felt terrible because my family was not here.

Julia Ballestas

I came in an airplane for the first time, and I came to study English. I came with my sister and my mother. When I came, my cousin and my uncle came to the airport. They took us to their house. I came on November 28, 1968, and in that month it was very cold.

The first day I went to school I did not know English, so I felt confused. I started crying because I didn't speak English. After one month someone introduced me to some new friends and after that day I felt so happy.

Dora Gonzalez

# WHEN I CAME TO THE UNITED STATES

When I came to the United States, I was surprised to see the big buildings. I was surprised to see the zoo, too. I saw many animals: lions, cats, dogs, elephants, zebras, monkeys, and cows. I liked to drink Coca-Cola; I never had it in my country.

I came from Lisbon to New York in November. I felt the weather was cold. I took another airplane to Boston. I took a cab from the airport to my house. My parents lived in a house at 1045 Cambridge Street. I came late at night. I was 25 years old. I was glad to see my family because I had happiness with them.

After the first night, I started my work at the First National Bank. I clean the windows and I wash the floors. I work from 10 P.M. to 6 A.M.

I fought in a war for 3 years in Angola. I stayed in a city. The other soldiers went to the country to fight. My specialty was the obuz. The other soldiers were wounded. They came to the hospital in Lisbon. Some came dying. Others came to Lisbon when they finished their time.

I am very glad to live here. I have many friends. I met them at work and some at school. I like the customs, the dress, and the taste of these people. I need just 3 more years to be a citizen, I hope.

Miguel Borges

# THE COMMUNION

My son's mother-in-law's mother died---my daughter-in-law 's grandmother. We went to the church for the funeral, a Catholic church. We stayed in the church. Then it was time for the Communion. We have a different Communion in our church. Here they gave you a little thing like a candy---a little round thing that the Priest puts in your mouth. It's a wafer.

Anyway, everybody was going to take Communion. We didn't know what to do. I said: "Well, let's go. It doesn't hurt anything. It's Communion. What's the difference?"

My brother, Jimmy, and I were there. My brother was a little bit shy. He didn't know what to do--whether to go or not. I said: "It's nothing. It's no sin." My daughter-in-law and her parents were wondering what we were going to do. Were we going to go? to feel embarassed?

We got up and took a turn. But the Priest asked my brother something and he had to answer something before he took the Communion. My brother didn't understand and couldn't speak well, but he went up just the same. He wanted to do it like everybody else. The Priest was supposed to ask us something before he gave us the wafer. He asked my brother a question--I don't remember what. Maybe it was something like: "Do you want to take this?" He asked everybody, even the Catholic people.

My brother didn't know what to answer because he can't understand or speak English very well, but he opened his mouth and said: "I don't know, I'm Greek." The Priest took out the wafer!

Jimmy did the same thing. He said to the Priest: "I'm Greek, too, Father." And the Priest didn't give him anything. Then I went and I opened my mouth. The Priest said something to me, but I was so fast that he had no chance to take the wafer out of my mouth!

My daughter-in-law was so embarassed. "What will my mother-in-law and father-in-law do now? What are they going to do?" She felt guilty because she hadn't explained things to us. When you take Communion you have to answer something. We didn't know. My brother just said: "I'm Greek."

Bessie and James Skentzos

## MY FIRST JOB

I started working in a shoe factory. In the beginning, I had a lot of trouble speaking English and learning the work, but it did not take too long. At first, people laughed at me.

Now I do not work. I'm retired. All I do is housework to keep me busy. I like to crochet and embroider.

Maria Reibeiro

This is about my first job. I worked in Haiti four years ago. I got the job from my cousin when she came to the United States. It was in a post office--different types of jobs: clerical, typing, and office duties. I did my best.

Then I got married and I left Haiti to join my husband over here. My sister took the job. Here I've had a lot of trouble with the language. Sometimes I'm nervous. Everything is difficult to do.

Now I hope to do better than before.

Marie-Claire Lysius

THE NEW BABY

Yesterday morning, Jimmy and I got up and we had breakfast. There was no school. It was a lovely day. I asked my husband if I could have a ride to Newton to the beauty parlor. I wanted to have my hair done. Jimmy said: "O.K. Let's go. It's a lovely day to have a ride."

We got to the place and I had my hair done. At about 11:30 we stopped at my brother's house in Newton. They asked to have lunch there. We had lunch and I watched the stories on T.V. Then I went straight to my work because I work at 3 o'clock.

Jimmy came home to have his nap. My son from Newton tried to get in touch with us because his wife had her baby, the first one. He kept calling and calling our house to tell us the good news, but nobody was home. He tried from 9 to 3.

Everybody else knew except Jimmy and me that we were grandparents again. Then my son finally reached Jimmy at home and he told him the good news. Jimmy was so happy. He thought it was a good idea to wait for me so we could go together to the hospital. He came about 8:30 to take me from my work and he told me the news. I was so happy to hear it, but it was too late to visit.

The baby's name is Jimmy Edward. He weighs about 7 pounds. I was so excited I couldn't sleep. I went to bed, but I couldn't close my eyes.

The next day was a school day. We wanted to visit my daughter-

in-law and the new baby as soon as possible. We were sure that our teacher would excuse us if we were absent. We got dressed. I wanted to buy flowers. I wanted to prepare nice little presents, but I called my son and he said we couldn't visit during the day time. We had to wait because visiting hours are from 7:30 to 8:30 at night.

I was very disappointed. We decided to come to school today. We will go visit Jimmy Edward tonight after my work.

Bessie Skentzos

# MY FIRST STORY---A DRACULA MYSTERY

A man beat a woman and drank her blood.

She screamed and died of fear.

He was a monster-man. His name was Dracula.

Another man took a Cross and put it on Dracula's chest.

Dracula screamed and turned into ashes.

THE END

Nilda Rivera

CELEBRATIONS

# CHRISTMAS EVE

This Christmas Eve I was very happy here, because it was a special day for me. This year I went to St. Margaret's Convent in Boston.

I left home at 9 o'clock and stayed there until the midnight Mass. The Sisters were very happy to see me there with them because they hadn't seen me for so many years. They were so glad I was back in the Convent again having Mass with them. I took Communion and I enjoyed hearing the Sisters singing the music.

After Mass, I saw a couple of friends. We sat down and talked until 2 o'clock. Then the Sisters came and told me: "It is too late, too late to sit down here talking. It is time to sleep now."

I said: "Yes, Sister, we will." But we still sat and talked because we hadn't seen each other for so long.

Jeanne Luc

# CHRISTMAS IN BARRANQUILLA

I am from Colombia, but my city is Barranquilla. Christmas Day is very happy. The people in my city are happy. They celebrate with a special dinner and dancing. All the house have Christmas tree and creches. That night the parents give the presents to the children and everybody is happy.

The difference between my country and here is the weather, because in my city the climate is hot and here it is cold. The area I live in in Barranquilla is very pretty. All the houses are wood and have beautiful gardens. At this time the plants have beautiful flowers.

Julia Ballestas

# CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S

My Christmas Eve was so-so. I went to a Christmas party at my sister-in-law's. She lives in Waltham. There was Haitian food and Haitian music. Some people danced. There were many adults and many children, too. All my family went.

At midnight my sister-in-law went to the Christmas tree and gave presents to everyone. At 2 o'clock in the morning I went home and drank alone until 4 o'clock. I drank wine. Christmas Day, I remember, I drank too.

New Year's Day I watched television. I watched the parade they had in California. I saw John Wayne. They had many football games.

New Year's is a big holiday in Haiti because New Year's Day is now our Independence Day. Many people drink on New Year's Eve--drinking, dancing, music. New Year's Day they have Te Deum in the Cathedral. The government officials go to the church for Te Deum. There is a canon with three explosions--boom! boom! boom! After this, the government officials go through all the streets in the capital. They go to see all the people on all the streets. After this, some people go to their houses. There is more eating, dancing, and drinking!

Max Sautier

# HOLIDAYS AROUND THE WORLD

## Independence Day in Haiti

Independence Day is January 1 in Haiti. Everyone in the government goes to church for the Te Deum Mass. At 5 minutes to 12 midnight, everyone kneels down. We start to pray a secret prayer; nobody talks.

After the Mass, everybody goes outside the church and shakes hands. They say: "Happy New Year!" This is "Bonne Année." in French. After this they go home.

At about 3, we start to prepare the big dinner. We make soup. We have cake and wine. The day after this, January 2, we have the big dinner. All the family eats together. We eat special foods: turkey, chicken, pork, peas, and rice. We eat together, drink together, dance together, talk together. It's a big holiday.

We fix up our houses before the New Year. Everything is new. We change our curtains and our tablecloths. We repaint the walls of our houses. We get new clothes: new suits, new shoes, new dresses. New Year's Day, Independence Day, is the biggest holiday in Haiti.

Saincienne Victor; Adius Pierre; Max Sautier

## Good Friday in Cuba

There is a procession around the church with all the people. They carry the Cross with the dead Christ. The men carry a coffin through the street. This is from 12 to 3 o'clock. It's

very different from here, I think.

Osmara Dominguez

Easter in Greece

We go to church about 11 Saturday night before Easter Sunday. Everyone gets dressed up. We buy candles at the church door. Every person has to hold a candle that night.

At 5 minutes to 12 midnight, the Priest says: "Shut all the lights off!" The people are very quiet. They wait there. At exactly 12 midnight, the Priest comes in front of the altar with the light--3 crossed candles. He says: "Christ is risen!"

Another person takes the light from the Priest. Each person gives the light to another person. In 5 minutes the whole church is filled with lighted candles. We sing the whole prayer, "Christ is risen!" After this, we have the whole Mass--about 1½ hours.

Near the end of the Mass, the Priest gives everyone a piece of holy bread and one red egg with a very fancy little wrapping. The Priest says: "Christ is risen!" and then we go home.

The egg is red because it is the blood of Christ. We have red eggs and also we make doughnuts--special round cookies. We dye the eggs red. We never dye eggs different colors. We only dye them red; that is the custom. Here in America, people dye eggs different colors.

We have a very special table that night when we get home from church. We celebrate Christmas, but Easter is the biggest holi-

day for Orthodox people.

Everybody comes home from church with a lighted candle. We bring it home from the Mass. We light the candlesticks on the table with the same light from the church. Everybody sits around the table. We kiss each other and say: "Christ is risen!". The other person says: "It is real!"

We have a very special meal. Greeks eat lamb, very young lamb. That is the custom. We roast it. Each person takes a red egg in his hand and breaks the egg with the person next to him. We say: "Christ is risen!" We say a prayer and then we eat. We go home at about 4 in the morning.

In Greece, on the next day they roast a lamb outside in a big hole in the yar . They don't do that here because it is sometimes too cold. In Greece, they put the lamb on a stick. People sing. They visit their families.

People sing. They dance. They drink. All day they say: "Christ is risen!" and "It is real!". Easter is the biggest holiday in Greece.

Bessie and James Skentzos

MY WEDDING

My wedding was beautiful. I had a long train on my wedding dress. It was white. White means innocence. Pink means love. Green means hope. Blue means a virgin, the Virgin Mary. Ye'low means luck. Two kids held the end of my train. I walked with the best man. He was a priest. My husband walked with the maid-of-honor. I had flowers in one hand.

I had my reception before the wedding. They dressed me up and put me in the living room. We had a party and a big cake.

We went to a hotel for the honeymoon. I was married on Saturday. We stayed at the hotel Saturday night, Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday. Wednesday night I flew back to the United States. My husband couldn't come back at the same time. I came here and made out immigration papers for him and sent them to him.

We were engaged before I came to the United States. I lived here two and a half years before I was married. I went back to Haiti just to get married. I went back on April 1 and was married on May 28, 1966. I was very happy to see my fiance. He came every day. Sometimes we went to the movies.

Right now my husband is in Haiti. He doesn't feel very well. He hurt his back when he was working for a container corporation. He went back to Haiti to see the doctor four months ago. My kids went back in August because I can't support them babysitting and working at the same time. I miss my kids more than I miss

my husband. But I prefer that Elizabeth goes to school there to get a French education. I really miss my kids. They are really cute.

Jeanne Luc

# OUR WEDDING

Jimmy and I knew each other for some time in Greece. We were from the same town. We had some disagreements, fights sometimes. Finally we decided to be married. It was really a very bad time. It was the start of the War, 1940.

Following the customs in our country and in our religion, my step-father gave me away. The ushers took the ladies to their seats. The men walked all alone.

The groom was waiting at the altar with the Priest, the best man, and the ushers. Then the ceremony began. A little flower girl came first. Then a little boy in a tuxedo with a fancy little pillow for the ring. Then the maid-of-honor and the bridesmaids. And then my step-father took me down the aisle. I didn't have a white dress. I had a very fancy light pink dress. It's unusual.

Afterwards, everybody went to a restaurant to have dinner. We ate lamb. Greeks usually eat lamb. Americans choose roast beef. We ate and we got favors, white, sugar-covered almonds for good luck. Three times the best man exchanged the white flower crowns which were on our heads. We still have these crowns. The best man put the rings on our fingers, too.

Then we danced, we drank, we ate. We had an orchestra and we did Greek dancing, just the family.

In a few months the War started. Jimmy left. They took him to Poland. I came to this country in 1948 with our four children. Jimmy came two months after.

Bessie and James Skentzos

# DIFFERENT CUSTOMS WHEN A BABY IS BORN

Cuba:

When a child is going to be born in Cuba, we make a fruit liquor. If I am pregnant one or two months, my mother makes a big pot of syrup, with sugar, water, and all kinds of fruit. We put it away inside the room. When the baby is born, we open it and the visitors drink the liquor. The father gives cigars to the men.

Osmara Dominguez

Haiti:

In Haiti, we prepare all new things for the baby: new clothes, new oil, new powder, new diapers. When the baby comes from the hospital, everybody comes to see it. They put some money under the baby's pillow. Some people bring baby oil, soap, powder, clothes.

We make a big new cradle for the baby. Some people put different colored cloth on the cradle: pink, blue, white- pretty colors. When my first baby was born, I put pink on the cradle. It was very nice.

Saincienne Victor

Portugal:

In Portugal, when the mother is pregnant, she makes clothes for the baby. After about four or five months, she stops making clothes. After the baby is born, friends give the mother fruit and eggs. The mother gives the baby her milk. It's better to breast-feed the baby. The baby gets more love. It's good.

Maria Cardosa

# MY WIFE

I met my wife in the subway because we both worked in Boston. Every morning we took the same train. I saw her every time and we talked. That's how we met.

The first time I met her I introduced myself to her. For three months after that, I never saw her again. I knew what time she always took the train, but when I came at the same time to talk to her, she was never there.

After three months, I met her one morning and asked her: "What happened to you? I have been coming early for a long time. I lose several minutes waiting for you because I want to see you."

She said: "Well, I have been sick. I have been in the hospital." She had an operation. That's why she never went to work.

O.K. Now I started to talk to her about how I felt towards her. In the mornings I tried to meet her. I gave her my phone number and she gave me her phone number. Now we talked often on the phone. But she never told me what she thought about me. I told her that I loved her. She didn't say anything.

She was married before and she got divorced. She told me that she was afraid of men because her husband was not too good for her. I tried to let her know that everybody is not the same way. Sometimes it's good to take a chance.

One day I told her: "I want to go to your house to visit you."

She said yes. Now I went to her house and we had the chance to talk. We talked and we talked and we talked.

She said: "Well, maybe." She said: "Well, I'm going to see what I can do. Maybe next week I will tell you if I can say yes, O.K.?"

I still called her, talked to her, and I met her in the subway. We talked all the time. One day she accepted my offer. That's all. Right now we are married. We were married ten months ago on March 10, 1972. I'm not sorry, because she's a good lady---- and I'm a good man, too.

Francis Aubry